



# 2006 *Legislative Report*

For the 21st District

## Senator Paull Shin

*"As always, it is an honor and privilege to serve you."*



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**Committees:**

- International Trade & Economic Development, *Chair*
- Agriculture & Rural Economic Development, *Vice Chair*
- Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education

**Spring 2006**

Dear Neighbors,

I am especially pleased this year to report to you on the results of the most recent legislative session. Although the short sessions in even-numbered years are typically devoted to modest efforts to update the state's two-year budget, this year the Legislature made bold headway on several unusually prominent issues. At the same time, we agreed on a fiscally and morally responsible budget that invests in our families and our future. We paid for programs needed now to avoid having to pay higher costs later, and set aside a responsible reserve of \$935 million to address future costs that will soon be facing the state.

As chair of the Senate International Trade & Economic Development Committee, I was particularly gratified to see the Washington Customized Employment Training program signed into law March 20 by Gov. Chris Gregoire. This bill will make our state more attractive to new and expanding businesses by creating a mechanism to train workers in the high tech jobs of the future. It benefits workers additionally by attracting new jobs to the state and giving them training for those jobs at no cost. The aforementioned benefits are obvious, while others are less so but no less important; this program can boost employment and business revenues, and make Washington even more attractive to domestic and international companies. We also passed bills that enhance the business climate in our state and improve our economic development.

Outside of my committee, some of the more celebrated measures included landmark legislation on medical malpractice, sex predators and the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). The Legislature also made sure our ongoing major transportation projects will be uninterrupted and cost-effective, and that the voting rights of veterans and other overseas voters will not be jeopardized. I urge you to take a moment to read of these and other important measures detailed inside this newsletter.

Closer to home, the Legislature made more progress on solidifying the industrial aerospace future of Paine Field by expanding the Business & Occupation tax credit to include numerous commercial aircraft applications. Again, more information on these bills appears inside.

Thank you, as always, for the privilege of representing you in Olympia. I can do that best when I know your thoughts, questions and concerns about the issues important to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me with a letter, a call to my office or the toll free legislative hotline, or an e-mail.

Sincerely,

Sen. Paull Shin

# International Trade and Economic Development

## Workforce Training: Matching students, schools and jobs

**Washingtonians want meaningful careers. Our businesses want highly trained workers. This legislation links the two needs, with minimal up-front costs.**

Training prospective workers for the customized needs of businesses makes sense not only for employee and employer but for our state economy and tax base. My bill established a \$3.15 million revolving fund from which grants will be awarded to pay the upfront costs of customized training for a business's new employees. The training will be provided by local community and technical colleges or private training institutions. Participating businesses must pay back one-fourth of the training costs upon the completion of training and the remaining three-fourths over the subsequent 18 months and receive a business-and-occupation tax credit for up to 50 percent of the cost of the training. To qualify, businesses must increase their employment in the state by at least 75 percent of the trainees in the training program. With the money in the revolving fund, this program has the capacity to train up to 1,000 workers a year. A similar program in Iowa has created more than 3,000 jobs since 1983.

**These bills  
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and business.**

## Trade Corps: Putting skilled students to work in overseas offices

**Our state is a leader in international trade, but we can do even better.** Unfortunately, my proposal to create a Washington Trade Corps Fellowship did not become law this year; next year I will propose the



bill again in a way that I hope will win full passage. The idea behind the Trade Corps is to place students for up to a year in one of our trade offices to learn the language, culture, and marketing potential of their host country. The student would provide additional staffing to the trade office and help Washington companies do business overseas. At the same time, the student would gain experience and grounding in a valuable career field. Like the workforce training program, this legislation links the needs of students and business to benefit both parties as well as the state.

## International Trade & Economic Development: A busy 2006

**We want Washington businesses, large and small, to succeed.** As chair of the Senate International Trade & Economic Development Committee, it was my pleasure to see so many strides taken to move Washington forward. This year:

- The Legislature continued to support jobs at Paine Field and

elsewhere in our aerospace industry by extending previously existing tax credits to include not only aerospace manufacturers but suppliers and innovators as well. The credit will now include commercial aircraft preproduction development expenditures, aircraft manufacturing property and certified equipment repair stations;

- The Legislature invested in our state's emerging biotechnology industry by providing tax incentives for investments in biotechnology, including safeguards to require repayment if the incentives are not used for their intended purposes;
- The Legislature created an inventory of grants for state agencies, local governments and other community organizations involved in economic development, to ensure that valuable sources of funding are not overlooked; and
- To preserve jobs and to keep the important metal manufacturing industry operating in Washington, the Legislature extended a temporary tax credit through 2012.

# Legislative Accomplishments

## Improving transportation

**Better transportation requires more than a big budget – it takes smart choices and accountability to stretch the most out of every dollar.**

With major transportation projects in progress from past legislative sessions, this year the Legislature focused on performance and accountability:

- In order to ensure that regional transportation plans are made in a coordinated manner, we required that the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID) and Sound Transit propose projects on a single 2007 ballot, with both measures required to pass in order for either to be approved.
- To improve efficiency and accountability, we revised the responsibilities of the Washington State Department of Transportation and the Washington Transportation Commission to eliminate waste and duplication.
- We also revised the formula for the local Motor Vehicle Excise Tax (MVET) to more fairly provide accurate vehicle valuation and depreciation, reflecting the lower prices buyers actually pay.
- To make sure Washingtonians get what they pay for, we passed laws to hold driving schools and instructors more accountable for bad instruction.



## Making the WASL work



**We want all students to meet strong standards, and we want to help struggling students to succeed academically.**

This year's 10th-grade class is the first for which the Washington Assess-

ment of Student Learning (WASL) is a requirement for graduation. Because this is a dramatic change in policy, the Legislature approved alternative methods of assessment for students who struggle with traditional tests. Students who fail the WASL may still graduate if their grades equal or exceed the grades of peers who passed the WASL, or if they submit a portfolio of work that demonstrates academic competence, or if they meet state standards for mathematics on other tests such as the SAT.

In addition, the Legislature set aside \$28 million for tutoring, before- and after-school programs and summer school for students who are not meeting academic standards. The Legislature also authorized a study of barriers to student success and ways to help struggling students perform better.

## Guarding against sex predators

**Sex predators face tougher penalties and stiffer requirements for registering as sex offenders.**

We increased minimum prison sentences to 25 years for predatory and violence sex offenses against children and vulnerable adults. We increased registration requirements and penalties for failing to register. We increased penalties for so-called "precursor crimes" such as voyeurism, child pornography and Internet grooming. We provided \$50 million to provide additional space for incarceration and \$2 million to assist victims.



## Protecting voters' rights

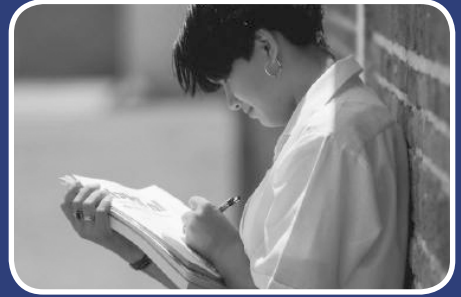


**We made sure everyone's vote will be counted – accurately and on time.**

To ensure that military and other absentee votes are properly counted, the date of the state primary election was moved from the third Tuesday in September to the third Tuesday in August. This has the added advantage of allowing election administrators additional time to ensure that all votes have been counted and correctly, especially in the event of a close race. We also required that voting devices and tallying systems be tested and certified by an independent testing authority designated by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.



## Our troops need our support, abroad and at home



**Our veterans deserve not just our thanks for their service but our help when they return to their communities.**

To ease that transition, the Legislature created the Veterans Innovations Program this year to assist veterans when they return to their families and communities after serving in military actions. The program will provide crisis and emergency relief, education, training and employment assistance as well as one-time financial hardship grants for employment, education, housing and health care.



We also established a down-payment assistance program to help veterans purchase homes, and passed legislation to increase tuition waivers and ease college admissions for veterans.

Lastly, we increased property tax deferments for veterans who are retired due to a physical disability; those with a disposable income of \$40,000 or less can now defer tax payments for personal residences on up to five acres of property that cannot be subdivided.

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